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Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

17th plenary meeting
Friday, 28 September 2012, 6 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Balé (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.35 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Mr. Bildt (Sweden): Our world is changing rapidly. The black-and-white photos that were taken when this Organization was created back in 1945 are truly testimonies from another era. That was a time when computers had barely been invented. The Internet was decades away. And it was not always easy for the representatives at that founding conference in San Francisco to establish contact with their faraway capitals for instructions that might be needed.

These days, we have instant access to the global information network. Tweets are being written as I speak. There are more connected devices than there are people in the world, and development is accelerating in every respect. In 2012, we who are gathered here have all become representatives of the connected nations of the world. But, connectivity also carries risks, as we saw recently in our interconnected financial system,

Recently, we also all followed with horror and disbelief the fact that an odious film clip posted somewhere on YouTube could lead to outrage and deadly violence 10,000 miles away. But the opportunities created by connectivity are vastly more important than the risks. Globalization, marked by more open societies in a more open world and facilitated by the enormous advances of science and technology, has been an incredible force for good. Mobile banking brings financial services to East Africans. Skype reinforces messages from the Arab street. Virtual marketplaces unleash entrepreneurial talent. More contact, more movement and more trade — a more open world — have already lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and despair, and more is certain to come.

In this world of connected nations, people around the globe, including tens of thousands of Swedes of Syrian origin, are following the tragedy unfolding in Damascus, Aleppo and Homs with intense concern. We have all been reminded of a simple truth — violence is easy to start but very difficult to stop. What began as a popular protest has now turned into a civil war, which, if unchecked, brings the risk of sectarian fragmentation across the wider region. We must do everything possible to prevent that from happening. We call on the divided Security Council to put global responsibilities above narrow national interests. In the strongest possible terms, we urge the Al-Assad regime to stop killing its own people and start respecting its obligations as a Member of the United Nations. And we remind those responsible for deadly violence and abuse that they should rest assured that they will be held accountable one day.

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There is no alternative to a political solution. Together with our European partners, we offer our full support to the Joint Special Representative, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Syria is a society that is rich in culture, history and traditions. Damascus is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in our world. To preserve and protect the mosaic that Syria represents is vital to its future, and, I would argue, to all of our futures.

But we must also help those now so tragically affected by what is happening. A thousand people are being killed every week, according to the latest reports we are receiving. We are witnessing an enormous human tragedy. More than 2.5 million people are in need of humanitarian help. More than a million people have been displaced inside Syria, and there are a quarter of a million refugees in the region as a direct consequence of the current crisis. The regime must give unhindered access for assistance to the displaced and suffering, and the countries that have generously opened their borders should be commended and supported. Sweden, which is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors, has contributed massively, and we stand ready to further increase our support here and elsewhere around the world where people in need are suffering.

In this world of connected nations, the human rights of every child, woman and man are a matter of concern for us all. Protecting and promoting human rights is one of the central duties of the international community. Not only is that a question of protecting individual human beings — their life, their freedom, their future — but it is also crucial to promoting peace, stability and prosperity around the globe. And critical to those efforts is working for gender equality and the empowerment of women, because it is right, because it is smart and because it is fundamental to realizing the economic and political potential of society.

Sweden, the largest financial contributor to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights today, is a candidate for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015. As a Council member, Sweden would be an active and reliable partner. We would work with everyone who shares our conviction, reach out to those who disagree and support those who need it. But in that area as well, we must adjust to the world of connectivity. The human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must apply in the modern world of today. Sweden will take every opportunity to champion freedom of expression online and the immense development potential that is vested in the Internet and all of the new communication technologies. Earlier this year, the Human Rights Council decided that the rights that apply offline apply online as well, and called on all States to promote and facilitate access to the Internet. That landmark resolution (Human Rights Council resolution 20/8) was unanimously adopted in Geneva, and I hope that it has been duly noted here in New York as well. The fight for freedom on the Internet is the new front line in the fight for freedom in the world.

In this world of connected nations, we share a planet with common development challenges. The world's poor — indeed, all of us — need development that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable. The international community has met three of the Millennium Development Goals well ahead of time, but we are lagging significantly behind in others. And while we accelerate efforts to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, we have started to look beyond the immediate future. Sweden welcomes the high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda and looks forward to contributing to its recommendations.

In Rio, world leaders recently launched a process for working towards sustainable development goals. It is up to all of us to take that agenda forward: to involve scientists and business, to explore the potential of information and communications technology and innovation, to pursue all three dimensions of sustainable development and to ensure that democracy and human rights are part of the equation. And as an active partner and a major donor, Sweden will certainly do its part.

In this world of connected nations, geography is sometimes of little consequence. Distances might at times seem enormous. But the melting Arctic ice cap in the North can pose an existential threat to small island States in the South. The Arctic today is warming twice as fast as the global average. And right now as we gather here, the Arctic Sea ice cover has receded so much that it has reached a new historical minimum. There is less ice this autumn in the Arctic than ever before in recorded history.

The impact of climate change is global. The world is not on track for keeping the increase in global average temperatures to below two degrees Celsius. We therefore urgently need progress in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change and effective implementation of the globally agreed outcomes. Sweden calls on everyone in this Hall to do their utmost to contribute to ensuring that that occurs, and developed nations should take the lead.

There are severe challenges, but there are also great opportunities. Technology brings new possibilities — to reduce emissions, increase growth, and move towards a truly sustainable future. As the current Chair of the Arctic Council — comprising the eight nations whose landmass extends beyond the Arctic Circle — Sweden will make its contribution. Together, we will set an example of positive cooperation in an area drawing rapidly increasing global attention and where, not long ago, many were predicting competition and conflict.

We live in a new era. What happens in the Levant, the Arctic or elsewhere has immediate implications for us all. In order to deal with the challenges of this era, the connected nations of this world need a strong United Nations — a United Nations to discuss the issues of today and to truly seize the opportunities for collective action in order to shape a better tomorrow; a United Nations where we convene in these days to say that, while ridiculing what by others is held sacred is mean and offensive, it can never be used as an excuse for violence, destruction and death.

But the United Nations — our United Nations — needs to step up to the challenge. The Security Council must assume its responsibilities, in Syria and elsewhere. Member States must empower the United Nations to become better at conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and ensure that it can deliver development results effectively and as one.

It is up to us, the Member States, to meet our international human rights obligations, not just in order to protect the individual human being, but because respect for human rights is also, as we have bitterly learned throughout history, critical to peace and security.

In these times of accelerating global change, with its great risks and even greater opportunities, Sweden will remain a steadfast member of this global Organization and, together with our partners in the European Union, we will continue to promote an effective multilateral system with the United Nations at its core.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. I am confident that his experience in international affairs will enable him to guide the work of this session wisely and ably, and I wish him every success in his task.

I would also like to commend his predecessor, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his successful and prudent leadership of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and to commend the great efforts made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and pay tribute to his tireless efforts and the role of this international Organization in promoting international peace, security and development.

Security and stability in the Arab Gulf region are a high priority for all of us. Our balanced policies are based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, especially those calling for peaceful coexistence, confidence-building, good neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, and pursuing peaceful means in resolving conflicts and disputes.

On the basis of those principles, my Government expresses, once again, its regret regarding the continued Iranian occupation of our three islands: Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. We demand the restoration of the United Arab Emirates' full sovereignty over those islands. We emphasize that all actions and measures taken by Iran are null and void, and are in contravention of international law and all norms and universal human values.

The events unfolding in Syria are for us a cause for great sadness. They have gone beyond all limits and norms. The United Arab Emirates is closely, and with great concern, following the policies of violence, killing, displacement and expulsion being pursued by the Syrian regime against its people, which regime has lost all its legitimacy. We therefore call upon the international community to consider with seriousness and firmness what is happening to our Syrian brothers and to shoulder its humanitarian responsibilities. We see it as our duty to stop those atrocities against the peaceful Syrian people. We are convinced that a

solution to the crisis can be achieved only through an orderly transition of power.

That severe humanitarian crisis requires us to support the people of Syria, in particular the refugees. The United Arab Emirates has shouldered its responsibilities and obligations towards the Syrian refugees in Turkey and Jordan and will continue to do so by providing relief. We urge all States to contribute to such humanitarian efforts.

The Middle East holds great importance for us, and we believe that peace and stability will never be achieved in that region until the Arab-Israeli conflict is resolved. That is the central and vital issue to the people of the entire region, and reaching a just solution is the key for bringing peace and stability to the whole area. It cannot be realized without putting an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories through Israel's withdrawal to the lines of 4 June 1967, including from East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and the remaining occupied Lebanese territories. The achievement of a just and comprehensive peace must be carried out in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the considerable progress achieved in the political process in Somalia through the completion of the transitional phase, the convening of the Constituent Assembly, the adoption of the Constitution of Somalia and the election of Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the new President of Somalia. We also reaffirm our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Somalia, and look forward to working with its Government towards achieving security and stability and countering piracy in a region of such vital importance, not only with respect to oil and gas transport but also to the world economy in general.

In the United Arab Emirates, we remain committed to supporting the security and stability of Afghanistan and confirm the continuation of our humanitarian and developmental support to that distressed country. In that context, we welcome the outcome of the donors conference that was held in Tokyo, with the hope that the pledges announced at the conference will contribute to the process of the reconstruction of Afghanistan. As we approach the year 2014 and the commitment for military withdrawal from Afghanistan and for turning the country over to its people and Government, we aspire to see an Afghanistan that is free from terrorism, extremism and violence.

At the same time, the United Arab Emirates expresses its deep concern over the violence against the Rohingya Muslim community in Myanmar and calls upon the international community to urge the Government of Myanmar to cease all acts incompatible with the principles of fundamental human rights.

We reaffirm our commitment to all requirements of nuclear non-proliferation and renew our support for the efforts aimed at designating the region of the Middle East, including the Arab Gulf region, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction — especially the Arab Gulf region. In that context, we must also call upon Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subject all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime.

In that regard, we urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency in implementing its international commitments in order to dispel all fears and suspicions surrounding its nuclear programme. We look forward to a peaceful solution to that crisis, ensuring that our region remains free of tension and conflict, while guaranteeing the transparency and peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

The United Arab Emirates began in 2009 to develop a nuclear energy programme for peaceful uses in order to meet the country's growing demand for energy and to support economic development projects. It ensured that the programme's rules and regulations were based on the highest standards of sustained safety and security measures and principles of nuclear non-proliferation. I take the opportunity to call upon the States of the region to draw on the experience of the United Arab Emirates in that field and to study the standards of transparency, technology, safety and security upon which the programme is based.

We would like to emphasize the importance of addressing the implications of climate change, which involves developing renewable energy technologies to achieve sustainable development and providing clean energy for developing countries, which are among the goals advocated by the United Arab Emirates in offering various types of humanitarian and development assistance.

The United Arab Emirates reiterates its firm condemnation of all acts of terrorism, illicit trafficking in drugs and arms and human trafficking, as well as organized crime, which are interlinked phenomena that feed into each other. It reaffirms its resolve to continue cooperating with international and multilateral efforts aiming at the total elimination of those negative phenomena, which pose a direct threat to international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates has announced the establishment of the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism, in collaboration with several influential friends and actors, which will begin its work in Abu Dhabi at the end of the year. Moderation and tolerance are the basic principles guiding our political orientation and represent lofty values to the citizens of the United Arab Emirates and to society as a whole. In that sense, the United Arab Emirates has been and will remain committed to moderation in its approach, and accepts other communities as part of a diverse world built on mutual respect. Those are the human values that have formed our convictions with regard to many issues, such as counterterrorism, human rights, the empowerment of women and coexistence among peoples and religious sects.

The United Arab Emirates emphasizes the importance of consolidating the values of tolerance, moderation and respect for religions, as well as the importance of protecting religions against defamation and contempt and stresses the need to develop the necessary legislation in that regard. I must condemn, in the strongest possible terms, abuses against Islam, as freedom of expression should not be allowed to undermine any religion or belief, whatsoever. We also condemn all violent reactions to any such abuse.

Terrorism poses a challenge to international peace and security and leads to violating the human rights of ordinary people by depriving them of the right to live in peace and prosperity. In that context and based on our commitment to the principles of human rights, the United Arab Emirates renews its support of international efforts aimed at ensuring peace, security and prosperity for all the peoples of the world, and looks forward to expanding its engagement in that area.

The United Arab Emirates has also been focusing its efforts on reducing gender discrimination. Therefore, we look forward to playing an active role in the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, based on our successful national experience in empowering the women of the United Arab Emirates, who actively participate in managing the affairs of the State as well as the community.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to all Member States to support the quest of the United Arab Emirates to host World Expo 2020 in Dubai under the slogan "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future". We look forward to receiving the support necessary to strengthen my country's candidacy, particularly since it is the first time that the event will be held in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia region.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. José Badia, Minister for External Relations and for Economic Affairs and International Finances of the Principality of Monaco.

Mr. Badia (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Secretary-General has shared with us the priorities that he plans to implement during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. His warning concerning the multiplicity of new threats and his clear-sighted recognition of their interconnections should inspire and guide our work.

The maintenance of international peace and security — need it be said again — are the very essence of the mission of our Organization. What do we see before us? Crises and threats to peace and security are multiplying and are often even mutually reinforcing, along with the endangerment of human rights. What global vision do we share of the challenges that confront our planet, its States and its peoples? By bearing in mind that it is our mission and urgent need to uphold our vision, which calls on us to support the five priorities of the programme of action that have been drawn up for the next five years and submitted to us by the Secretary-General. Since he has invited us to so, we wish to underline the need to prioritize the strengthening of the United Nations system as well as the development of partnerships in all areas of its activity.

The President rightly sought to focus the general debate of this session on the subject of the peaceful settlement of international situations and disputes. This historic debate, launched at the beginning of the week by the General Assembly, has shown that respect for the rule of law, at both the national and the international levels, is indispensable for the establishment of responsible societies that are able to promote

cooperation and ensure the well-being of their citizens. Recent history leads us to take a serious look at the current difficulties confronting the world. While last year we welcomed the magnificent spark of democracy that was kindled in the Arab world, it is intolerable now that minority factions and extremists are threatening the hopes and dampening the expectations of people who aspire to live in liberty.

The Government of the Principality of Monaco echoes those who have condemned the acts of violence perpetrated both by the authorities and by opposition groups in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the situation only continues to deteriorate. I would also like to convey my full support for the efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and its resolve in seeking to ensure that humanitarian needs are met. Clearly, that is involves ensuring that each and every one respect the rule of international humanitarian law as the minimum requirement for meeting the basic, elementary moral standards of our peoples, standards that do not, unfortunately, seem to be shared by all.

We are equally concerned by the recent events in the Sahel region, including in Mali, which are growing worse. The Principality of Monaco, which is involved in various humanitarian efforts in the region, supports all such actions by the international community, given the urgency and gravity of the situation. We will support a strategy established by the United Nations that can address the issues of security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian aspects. The values that we are committed to uphold in adopting the Charter of the United Nations are based on our common humanity and on the recognition of our differences, which are at the very core of our humanity.

Allow me, in that regard, to pay tribute to all those who have been committed to serving those values on the ground, often paying with their lives. They seek to uphold the aims and principles that bring us together here in this forum. Our authorities have resolutely condemned all attacks perpetrated against diplomatic and consular missions and personnel. We must all ensure the obligation of guaranteeing their protection in all circumstances.

At a time when the world is facing worrying developments, the theme that the President has selected for this session of the General Assembly merits the unanimous support of all in our community. Aware of the challenges, I would like to take the opportunity to commend Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, on his election and to assure the Assembly of my delegation's full support.

More than ever before, we need to resort to the peaceful settlement of our disputes and seek to prevent rather than react to events. In the 1950s, Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld urged us to be mindful of the need to respond at an early stage to crises in order to avoid the outbreak of disputes between parties or the conflagration of a dispute into an open conflict, or in the event that a conflict does break out, to ensure that it can be contained.

We have been caught unaware and so many ongoing problems in the year 2012 have gone unsolved. We have been largely successful in ensuring that international law prevails over the right to wage war. However, the involvement of our Organization in conflict prevention still falls quite short, as avowals and statements of intent on their own are insufficient. It is therefore our common duty to strengthen understanding, tolerance and mutual respect. As was recalled by the Secretary-General here on 13 September, as well as by his predecessor, one of the strongest factors for conflict prevention, and thus for the inculcation of an authentic culture of peace, is education. That kind of prevention is aimed at enrolling the young generations to whom we owe a future.

The challenges are manifold. Among them, I would single out the economic and financial crisis, which has affected the overwhelming majority of our States since 2008. We can overcome the crisis, creating employment while protecting our environmental heritage. But in order to do so, we need an ambitious long-term vision, and that is why, in spite of the budget cuts, the crisis has compelled us to realize that we cannot afford to lose sight of the Millennium Development Goals — elimination of poverty and hunger; education; child and maternal health; and combatting pandemics, including HIV/AIDS and malaria, which sap humankind of its strength — which must remain uppermost on our agenda.

The upcoming deadline must encourage us to do still more to intensify our efforts in order to ensure their achievement. In 2015, we will adopt a new programme of action, based on the results achieved and on the new challenges to be met.

In his address to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, His Serene Highness Prince

Albert II of the Principality of Monaco welcomed the fact that we are progressing towards a shared definition of sustainable development goals. Those goals will frame our actions at the international, national and local levels, and in turn, that will make the implementation of our commitments more effective and more transparent.

One of those objectives should emphasize the sustainable development of oceans and on the importance of the blue economy.

That objective should concern all sectors that depend on ocean resources and maritime areas. It is urgent that that objective be comprehensive and sustainable so that those sectors can continue to benefit from economic, social and environmental services. Accordingly, our delegation will support all initiatives seeking to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the United Nations work in the oceans. Indeed, we believe that that is the right path to follow in order to ultimately ensure the sustainable use and management of the oceans and thereby their conservation.

The fate of future generations lies in our hands. For that reason, we are obliged to ensure that the Doha Climate Change Conference is a success. It is therefore crucial that we reach agreement on the establishment of a second period of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. We therefore commit ourselves to working positively and effectively in the negotiations on reaching a new global post-2020 climate agreement, taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable.

His Serene Highness Prince Albert II welcomes the celebration next year of the twentieth anniversary of Monaco's joining the United Nations as a Member State. In that connection, Monaco wishes to express its resolve to contribute to the further strengthening of our Organization to the extent that a small State can do so. Members may rest assured that the Principality welcomes the Assembly's two-fold intention of further involving itself in the field of development and establishing an advisory framework that seeks to enhance the cooperation between the General Assembly and international financial institutions.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Forum of Small States, of which Monaco is a member, and also in its capacity as a member of the Global Governance Group, the Principality intends to play its full role in the work of those bodies. The magnitude of the challenges and crises that we all face have shown that the size of a State is not the deciding factor when it comes to resolving such problems. Rather, it is solely our ability to work together and cooperate that enables us to respond to everyday needs and that will lead us on the path towards international peace and security.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan): Allow me very briefly to address what are, in our opinion, some of the most important items on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly. First of all, today, in this century of globalization and rapidly changing situations and growing tensions and confrontations in many regions of the world, we need to come up with unconventional and extraordinary responses to crisis situations and wars that have been ongoing for many decades and are therefore persistent features of our agenda.

To our great regret, instead of seeking to deeply understand emerging problems and confrontations in one region of the world or another and addressing them in a timely manner, finding their true origins or focusing the international community on preventing them from growing into large-scale crises and wars, the world is letting its most precious resource — time — slip through its fingers. That leads, of course, to enormous costs and the waste of other precious resources. Let me offer a few examples.

As early as in 1993, President Karimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan, when he spoke before the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see A/48/PV.6), drew the international community's attention to the need to immediately resolve the situation in Afghanistan, given the close connection between regional and global security, the need to respect the civil and religious rights of the people of Afghanistan and the need to prevent the conflict from growing into a full-scale civil war. Otherwise the problems in Afghanistan would turn into a painful and bitter issue of concern to the international community as a whole. Difficult problems may resurface when the imminent withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Forces from Afghanistan occurs by late 2014 and the responsibility for ensuring stability in the country is turned over to the newly created Afghan National Security Forces. It is obvious today that that turn of events may lead to a stand-off between opposing forces in Afghanistan itself and in neighbouring countries. It may also lead to the growth of extremism and radicalism, cause a surge in

drug trafficking and aggravate tensions in the region as whole.

As the situation is unfolding, the best way to address the situation in Afghanistan is to establish a contact group under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of the country's neighbours, the United States, NATO and the Russian Federation. The principal goal of such efforts should be to reach a compromise and an agreement between the opposing forces and form a coalition Government on that basis. Such a coalition Government could be comprised of the core ethnic, national and religious groups involved in the military and political stand-off taking place in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan has suggested that approach a number of times, for example, at the NATO summits in Bucharest in 2008 and in Chicago this year, as well as at the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals held in New York in 2010 (see A/65/PV.3). The Republic of Uzbekistan has always conducted, and will always maintain, a friendly, good-neighbourly policy towards its neighbour Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has built its relationship with Afghanistan on a bilateral basis, taking into account the national interests of both countries and respecting the Afghan people's choice in terms of the future of their country. Today, Uzbekistan offers comprehensive forms of assistance to Afghanistan so that it may return once again to peace. Specifically, we have contributed to the construction of bridges, motorways and the strategic Khairaton-Mazar-e-Sharif railroad link, which connects Afghanistan with the States of Central Asia, as well as providing an uninterrupted supply of electricity to Kabul. Uzbekistan plays a key role in ensuring the stable and effective operation of the northern distribution network.

Secondly, climate change and the global deteriorating ecological situation have made ensuring the reasonable and rational use of water resources the most acute problem of the modern world. Increasing shortages of fresh water, which is needed to provide food security and protect human life, serve to confirm that assertion. In that connection, I would like to present the Republic of Uzbekistan's main approach to addressing those issues, which are of vital importance for all the States of Central Asia.

We believe that all water and energy issues in our region, where the largest transboundary rivers — the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya — are the main sources of water and life for the millions of people residing near them, should be addressed in accordance with the universally recognized norms of international law provided for in the 1992 United Nations Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

Those instruments require adherence to the principle of doing no harm to the environment or to the interests of neighbouring States when exploiting the resources of transboundary rivers.

It is therefore reasonable that Uzbekistan calls for those principles and standards to be our guides in the search for mutually acceptable compromise decisions on water use. We believe that all hydropower facility construction projects in the upper waters of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya basins should be evaluated by international experts under the auspices of the United Nations and agreed to by the downstream countries. Only after such agreement and coordination should construction begin on two proposed dams, which are practically the largest in the world, namely, the 350-metre-high Rogun hydropower station in the upper waters of the Amu Darya and the 275-metre-high Kambarata 1 station in the upper waters of the Syr Darya. Furthermore, that construction has to be carried out in mountainous terrain where seismicity levels can reach 9 to 10 points on the Richter scale.

To comply with international requirements, it is essential to set priorities for water use. The region's limited water resources must first be used to meet drinking and sanitary needs, and only after that to ensure food security and to meet ecological demands and the needs of the industry and power sectors.

Thirdly, Uzbekistan remains committed to preserving peace, stability and security in the region. That principled position is stipulated in the Republic of Uzbekistan's position paper on foreign policy activity, formulated on the initiative of the Head of State of Uzbekistan. In particular, the document includes the following important provisions.

First, the Republic of Uzbekistan reserves the right to enter into alliances, join commonwealths and other inter-State establishments, as well as to leave them, guided by the supreme interests of the State, the people, their well-being and security, the priority guidelines for

modernizing the country, existing national legislation and international obligations that have been assumed. The paper continues, stating that Uzbekistan maintains a peace-loving policy, does not participate in military-political blocs, and reserves the right to leave any inter-State body if the latter is transformed into a military-political bloc. Next, the Republic of Uzbekistan will take political, economic and other measures to prevent its involvement in military conflicts or hotbeds of tension in adjacent States and will not allow the deployment of foreign bases and facilities on its own territory. Next, the armed forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan will not participate in military operations abroad. Finally, the main priority concern of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan is the region of Central Asia, where the country's crucial interests lie.

The problems of Central Asia must be addressed by the countries of the region without interference from external Powers. Uzbekistan remains committed to pursuing an open, friendly and pragmatic policy towards its immediate neighbours, and proceeds from a position that all outstanding political, economic and ecological problems of the region should be addressed on the basis of the mutual consideration of interests, constructive dialogue and the norms of international law.

We set great store by the United Nations as a universal structure and the only worldwide, universally accepted body capable of ensuring security, stability and consistent development, including in our region. Uzbekistan stands ready to continue to cooperate effectively with the Organization and its specialized bodies in order to achieve those high and noble goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate my good friend, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and to wish him every success in fulfilling his highly responsible duties. We are also grateful to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for presiding ably over the sixty-sixth session.

This is the first general debate that I have addressed since Azerbaijan was elected to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, and I would like to express our sincere gratitude and profound appreciation to the Governments of States Members of the United Nations for their valuable support for our candidacy and for their solidarity with Azerbaijan during 17 rounds of elections.

The theme of the this year's general debate, "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", is timely and topical. It also represents a logical continuation of discussions we had during the previous session. Indeed, the peaceful settlement of disputes is one of the key and core principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Its true value is to be able to commit States to respecting one another's territorial integrity and political independence, refraining in their international relations from the threat or use of force and resolving their disputes in conformity with international law.

At its sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution (resolutions 65/283 and 66/291), and the Secretary-General submitted a report on the subject that contains a Guidance for Effective Mediation (A/66/811, annex I). As a sponsor of those resolutions, Azerbaijan considers the process begun by their adoption to be an essential effort towards reinforcing the promotion of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as providing useful guidance to existing and future mediation mechanisms. A crucial factor is that those resolutions, and the Guidance for Effective Mediation developed by the Secretary-General, reaffirmed the key importance of the United Nations Charter and of international law and justice, in particular the commitment to respect and uphold the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

During Azerbaijan's presidency of the Security Council this past May, we organized an Arria-formula meeting of the Council to encourage a frank exchange of views, within a flexible procedural framework, on the role of mediation, judicial settlement and justice in promoting durable peace and reconciliation based on international law. We look forward to further initiatives on the topic in the General Assembly and the Security Council with a view to contributing to the development and implementation of comprehensive peace strategies within specific frameworks that provide that dispute

settlement and conflict resolution must be based on respect for the rule of law and for justice.

The world continues to face persistent, grave and systematic violations of the fundamental norms and principles of international law. There are still instances where archaic patterns of the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States are used to achieve territorial gains. Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world continue to suffer from aggression, military occupation, ethnic cleansing and a prevailing culture of impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

The ongoing armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues to represent a serious threat and challenge to international and regional peace and security. The conflict has led to the occupation of almost 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan and has turned more than one million people in the country into internally displaced persons or refugees. The war has also led to the deaths and wounding of thousands of Azerbaijanis, including women, the elderly and children. In addition, the aggression against Azerbaijan has severely damaged the country in socioeconomic terms. Not a single Azerbaijani historic or cultural monument has been left undamaged, and no sacred site has escaped desecration in either the occupied territories or in Armenia.

We sincerely believe that there is no alternative to peace, stability and mutually beneficial regional cooperation. As a country suffering from the occupation of its territories and the forcible displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan is the most interested party in the earliest possible negotiated settlement of the conflict. Without prejudice to its rights under the United Nations Charter, in particular those set forth in Article 51, Azerbaijan embarked on and remains committed to the conflict settlement process, confident that it will lead to the end of the illegal Armenian occupation, ensure the return of forcibly displaced people to their homes and guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the Nagorno Karabakh region within the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Attempts by the Armenian side to misinterpret the norms and principles of international law and its insistence on unrealistic annexationist claims, which Azerbaijan will never accept, speak to the real intentions of Armenia's leadership and represent an open challenge to the conflict settlement process, as well as a serious threat to international and regional peace and security. In flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, Armenia continues to use force to maintain its occupation of the Nagorno Karabakh region and seven other districts of Azerbaijan, as well as to prevent internally displaced Azerbaijani persons from returning to their homes. It is attempting to alter the demographic balance in the occupied territories and to remove any signs of their Azerbaijani cultural and historical roots. Additionally, regular ceasefire violations and deliberate attacks by the armed forces of Armenia against the inhabitants of towns and villages in Azerbaijan along the front line and the border between the two States have become more frequent and violent in recent times, resulting in the killing and injuring of many Azerbaijani civilians.

We have no doubt that the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of Nagorno Karabakh will one day live side by side in peace and dignity in that region of Azerbaijan. It is therefore essential and vital to continue efforts for peace and coexistence between the two communities. Azerbaijan considers that an important part of the whole reconciliation process and has therefore accepted invitations from a number of European non-governmental organizations to hold intercommunal meetings. However, those proposals have so far been blocked by the authorities in Yerevan. Moreover, the aggressive rhetoric of Armenia's leadership and its blatant promotion of odious ideas of racial superiority, ethnic and religious incompatibility and hatred towards Azerbaijan and other neighbouring nations only deepen mistrust and make more elusive the prospect of a speedy negotiated settlement.

The situation is further complicated by Armenia's irresponsible and unacceptable behaviour in the highly sensitive domain of justice and reconciliation. The perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including acts of genocide against the Azerbaijani people, not only remain unpunished in Armenia but are even promoted, venerated and officially rewarded with the title of hero. Schools, universities and streets are named after them and monuments are erected in their honour. War criminals who proudly avow their role in the mass killing of Azerbaijani civilians are reincarnated as highly placed politicians, military commanders and public figures.

Armenia must finally realize that the irresponsible and provocative policy of territorial claims, animosity and hatred towards neighbouring countries and nations based on historical, cultural, racial and religious prejudices has no chance of success. The earlier it grasps that fact, the sooner our countries will be able to reach mutual understanding and enjoy peace, stability and cooperation.

It is clear that both the conflict-settlement process and its outcome must be consistent with international law. The achievement of peace, security, stability and confidence therefore depends first and foremost on the removal of the consequences of Armenia's illegal use of force. That will ensure that the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan is at an end and that the right of internally displaced Azerbaijani persons to return to their homes and recover their property and possessions will be implemented. That is what international law and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions require, which means that this condition cannot be subject to compromise or used as a bargaining chip in the conflict settlement process. Armenia's implementation of its obligation to withdraw its armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan and to resolve outstanding issues of State responsibility for acts deemed wrongful under international law cannot be made contingent on addressing the aggressor's unlawful and unacceptable claims.

The fact that the situation has remained unresolved for so long does not speak well for the strength and efficiency of the international organizations that are deaing with the issue. It is obvious that the primary role in the resolution of the conflict lies with the States concerned. At the same time, when it comes to principles, it is everyone's duty to defend them. In that regard, Azerbaijan highly appreciates the principled stance of Member States, as expressed in various forums, including the most recent summits of NATO, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement, on issues of vital importance to our country and pertaining to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We count on the continued resolve of the international community to defend the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and on its strong solidarity with the just position of Azerbaijan.

We would like to express our concern over the situation with regard to the Middle East peace process, which has been at a standstill with no substantive progress towards the resumption of direct talks between the parties. We call upon the parties to create the conditions conducive to the resumption of negotiations. In that regard, we share the concerns of the international community over settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territories, which places a tremendous burden on civilians, seriously obstructs the peace process and, what is even more dangerous, threatens the two-State solution and the emergence of a viable Palestinian State. We reiterate our support for Palestine's application for admission to membership in the United Nations and look forward to a solution to that issuebased on international law.

Azerbaijan also remains deeply concerned about the escalation of violence and the worsening socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in Syria. We believe that the solution to the crisis lies in the hands of the Syrian people and in their desire for mutual reconciliation and an all-inclusive political process. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi as the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, and express our firm support for his efforts.

We must once again express our deep concern over the recent escalation provoked by the blasphemy against Islam. We strongly condemn all assaults against religions. At the same time, attacks on civilians, in particular on diplomatic personnel, are unjustifiable under any circumstances. It is critical to foster global dialogue and cooperation to promote tolerance, peace and better understanding across countries, cultures and civilizations.

We are confident that during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, Member States will be able to take successful steps towards a stronger and more effective United Nations. With its active participation in the work of the organs of the United Nations, most notably the General Assembly and Security Council, Azerbaijan will continue to be in the forefront of international efforts to that end.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Civil Aviation of the Republic of Fiji.

Mr. Kubuabola (Fiji): On behalf of the Prime Minister and the people of Fiji, I congratulate the President on his election and have full confidence in his guidance of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I wish also to pay tribute to the tireless efforts

of his predecessor, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, through what has been an eventful and turbulent year for the global community of nations.

The world is facing many challenges that demand our attention and collective action. As we all gathered last June in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, millions of people were recovering from, or living through, natural disasters. In Fiji, we experienced our worst flooding on record during the months of January and April. Beyond the human cost, the economic damage to infrastructure, schools, businesses, agriculture and tourism — a sector that generates 33 per cent of Fiji's gross domestic product — was immense, and we still have not fully recovered. Our floods were by no means the world's worst climatic disaster of the year; other peoples suffered much worse. But as a people who live on a group of small islands in the South Pacific, we feel particularly vulnerable.

The ongoing failure of the international community to seriously address climate change means that we will all see more frequent and more intense weather events. Those will erode our development gains and leave our people feeling poorer and less secure, so it is clear that it is indispensable to incorporate disaster risk reduction into global and national development strategies.

The post-2015 development agenda is now under discussion, and frameworks and modalities are being developed. However, our job with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not complete. As a global community of nations that has committed to those goals, we must give meaningful support to all those States lagging in their progress. We must also ensure that a post-2015 development agenda does not simply delay the target date for the MDG indicators and goals. The development community can do much more, including meeting our agreed objectives for development funding.

Fiji has embarked on a comprehensive reform programme not only to promote development, but also to improve the lives of our people. We have embraced the Millennium Development Goals as they were intended — to provide specific objective standards for improving the lives of our people. We are the second country in the world to introduce the pneumococcal and rotavirus immunizations as standard, with a view to minimizing child mortality. That represents progress towards meeting MDGs 4 and 5.

But the reward is not in meeting the goals; the reward is in children who are healthier, families that are less burdened, and generations given a better chance to become productive adults. We must never forget that behind each of those Millennium Development Goals are human beings — the citizens of our nations — who look to us to provide opportunities for a fuller life. We still have work to do particularly in meeting MDGs 1, 3 and 6, and we are working on those as best we can.

The particular case of small island developing States in meeting those goals and their specific challenges will be addressed by the third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in the Pacific region in 2014. The success of the Conference will be measured in actions, not simply in more words. Substantive preparations for the Conference must therefore be oriented towards taking action and achieving specific goals.

In addition to support for regional development, Fiji is also taking the lead in the region on broadband connectivity. It is clear to us that broadband is an essential technology for improving education, medicine, agriculture and environmental services. Broadband technology is especially important to us because it will help unite a dispersed people and help draw us closer to our island neighbours in the Pacific. If we take care to make it accessible, affordable and understandable, we will bring an entire universe of wisdom and understanding to the smallest schools and remotest villages. Information need no longer be the property mostly of people who live in the cities or who are attached to large institutions.

Like all islands nations, Fiji relies on the ocean and its resources as our economic lifeblood and source of sustainable development. While fish and other living marine resources have been vital to Fiji's economy and livelihood, we believe that our efforts to explore deep-sea mineral resources have greater potential, provided that a precautionary approach with regard to environmental sustainability is ensured.

The theme selected by the President for this year's general debate, "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", is most relevant in these times of turbulence across the world. The United Nations must continue to be at the vanguard of international peace and security. It must be able to respond to new types of crises, always with an aim to stabilize the places it

enters and leave behind not just a state of peace and stability, but also an environment that fosters freedom and opportunity for the people.

In that context, Fiji continues to play a role in peacekeeping missions around the world that is far beyond what is expected of a country of our size and level of development. We contribute troops and police personnel to operations in Iraq, Liberia, South Sudan, Darfur and Timor-Leste. Fiji has responded to exigent requests by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, above and beyond agreed contributions, to ensure that peacekeeping operations in Iraq can continue unhindered, despite the additional burden it has placed on our troops operating far from home and for longer than envisaged. We believe that all nations must find ways to make the world safer, more humane and more livable, and as a people we are proud that we can make that contribution to global peace and security and to the lives of citizens far away from us. That is not just Government policy; it is a calling that is deeply embraced by the Fijian people.

Recognizing the role that peacekeeping missions with expanded mandates play in helping to build the foundations of a sustainable future, Fiji has in the past year also started to contribute in a small yet meaningful way to the corrections and justice sector of peacekeeping missions. Mentoring and strengthening corrections and justice institutions is part of the process of allowing post-conflict societies to take control of their own destinies, and Fiji is pleased to be able to be a part of those unfolding stories around the world.

Fiji has been honoured to be a part of that process in our own region through our contributions in Timor-Leste via the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Following the successful elections in Timor-Leste early this year, UNMIT will be in a position to wind down its operations later this year, allowing the Timorese people to take full ownership and control of their own destinies. Timor-Leste is now an observer to the regional organization of which Fiji is the current Chair, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and we trust that through that organization and the United Nations we will have many years of collaboration ahead.

In the spirit of supporting self-determination, Fiji continues to work through the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations to ensure that New Caledonia's right to self-determination, as expressed in the Noumea Accord, is implemented faithfully by all parties. Fiji works through the Melanesian Spearhead Group in monitoring the progress of implementation of the Noumea Accord. Additionally, at the Engaging with the Pacific Meetings held in Fiji in 2011 and 2012, Pacific island leaders committed to supporting the inalienable right of the people of Ma'ohi Nui/French Polynesia to self-determination. We look forward to working through the United Nations processes and with all relevant partners in order to have the question of Ma'ohi Nui's self-determination placed on the United Nations agenda again.

Fiji is itself working through a period of reform and transition. We are building a sustainable democracy founded on the principle of "one person, one vote, one value". Elections will be held under a new constitution and electoral system no later than September 2014. Those elections will see the citizens of Fiji go to the polls without regard to their race for the first time in our nation's history. Fiji's new constitution will be based on some unassailable democratic principles: a secular State that recognizes our multi-faith society; a common national identity in which all citizens, not just indigenous people, will call themselves Fijians for the first time; a war against corruption, which inhibits the country's development; an independent judiciary to uphold the rights of every Fijian; social justice and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, so that every Fijian is treated equally; good and transparent governance; and lowering the voting age to 18 to give our young people a voice.

We set up an independent Constitutional Commission in March to draft a new constitution guided by those principles. It will be a constitution of and for the people. Ordinary Fijians are seizing the opportunity to put forward their views at public hearings throughout the country and to voice the issues that are most important to them. The Commission's recommendations will be reviewed by a Constituent Assembly in early 2013. This body, made up of a broad cross-section of Fijian society, will formulate the final document through public discussion and debate. That will set the scene for elections in 2014, for which preparations have already begun. Through a process of electronic registration carried out in July and August of this year, almost half a million Fijians have so far registered to vote.

Throughout this process, we have stayed true to the principle that we in Fiji must determine our own destiny, one that is inclusive and fair to all citizens.

We are taking the time necessary to get it right. We have endured criticism and a degree of isolation at the hands of some of our traditional friends among the world's democracies. By now, those countries have begun to recognize that we are serious about building a sustainable democracy that is racially blind, that offers equal opportunity, and that protects all citizens from the tyranny of the majority. We need the support of the world's democracies, and we invite them to work with us in our quest to establish the kind of democratic system that they enjoy. After 40 years of strife and instability, the work of true and sustainable democracy is just beginning, and we ask the international community to support us.

We have examined and redefined our world view to help forge productive, friendly relationships with all nations of goodwill. In 2011, Fiji opened three new embassies in Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa. We have expanded our diplomatic presence this year by opening embassies in the Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates. We want to learn more, to exchange more, to develop more, to trade more, and certainly to contribute more through active and robust engagement with other nations.

In the United Nations, Fiji pledges to work in the most constructive manner possible, and to respect the ideals of the United Nations Charter. That includes the International Labour Organization (ILO), with which we are engaged at the present moment. The Fijian Government's commitment to a future of equality and opportunity for all Fijians includes ensuring that the rights of working people are protected and extended.

The Constitutional Commission has received submissions from all sectors of Fijian society, including trade unions and public employees. We expect the new constitution to help us continue to build an environment that promotes safe working conditions, protects workers from arbitrary actions, and allows workers to form unions. We seek to ensure that unions can take collective action, as directed by their member workers, and are subject only to restrictions that are generally accepted as protecting the public good. We also seek to protect the rights of those workers who choose not to affiliate with unions.

The Fijian Government is committed to protecting workers who are fortunate enough to have jobs and to ensuring that all workers receive fair wages. We are equally committed to creating employment opportunities for the young and less affluent. As part of Fiji's progress in reform towards democracy, we are reviewing our current labour laws to ensure their compliance with the 34 ILO conventions that Fiji has ratified. The tripartite Employment Relations Advisory Board is a key participant in this process. This year alone, Fiji has ratified or adopted eight ILO instruments, as recommended by the tripartite Board, including the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention.

By empowering Fijians, the Government is seeking to ensure that all citizens, regardless of ethnic background, are on a level playing field and in possession of the tools needed to compete with their peers in the global community, improve their livelihoods and fulfil their dreams. By modernizing Fiji, the Government is seeking to make the country and its institutions and legal system strong, independent and world-class.

Fiji may be a relatively small country, but it has big aspirations. They include being a good global citizen, a leader by example among island nations, and an actively engaged member of the international community. In the spirit of constructive contribution to the global community and the United Nations, I am pleased to say that at today's ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 and China, Fiji was endorsed as the Chair of the Group for the year 2013. Fiji takes on this responsibility with a deep sense of humility, a willingness to work collaboratively with all States, and a commitment to addressing the inequalities that exist between developing and developed countries.

As we look forward to a productive sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, we reiterate our full support for and cooperation with the President and all Members, with a view to advancing the objectives of this body and the aspirations of the global community.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Saboya Sunyé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Institutional Relations of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Saboya Sunyé (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan; English text provided by the delegation*): I would first like to extend hearty congratulations to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, Mr. Jeremić, to whom I wish the greatest success in his work.

Just one year ago, I ended my statement (see A/66/PV.27) by reasserting the notion of

commitment as a fundamental value and linchpin of our political action, understood as a deep belief in the values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law; as the assumption of individual responsibilities for a common project; and ultimately as a desire for dialogue and understanding. It is in the pursuit of that commitment and that balance — what we might call the right balance — that the difficulty of Government resides. That is the case at home, in every one of our States, and also in our shared home of the United Nations.

A year ago in this Assembly, we echoed a phrase of the then French President, who stated: "Let us choose the path of compromise, which is neither renunciation nor repudiation, but which allows us to move forward, step by step" (*A/66/PV.11, p. 23*). Indeed, on the path of compromise and the right balance, we cannot and must not abandon the defence of human rights, the rule of law and the most essential democratic values such as freedom of expression. We cannot and should not deny respect to others.

However, establishing a fair balance does not mean conducting a balancing act. Indeed, that balance must be based on strong principles. There can be no excuse for violence, intolerance or impunity. President Obama was right when he mentioned in this Hall that the recent attacks on diplomatic missions were not solely an attack on the United States, but also an assault on the foundations of the United Nations itself. There can be no excuse or impunity for such acts.

(*spoke in English*)

We are all Chris Stevens. But what defines us is not how we fall but how we rise again. We will stand by all Chris Stevens as they rise to defend the ideals of the United Nations.

(*spoke in Catalan*)

Allow me today to echo the words of the new President of the French Republic, François Hollande, Co-Prince of Andorra, who stated before this Assembly that "The mission of the United Nations is to tackle these challenges and to find strong and just responses to them together." (*A/67/PV.6, p. 43*) For over 65 years, the United Nations has been a reference for peace, justice and respect for human rights. Remarkable progress has indeed been observed in recent years. It is no less true, however, that the countries represented here cannot afford the luxury of falling into complacency. The demand for just and strong responses is very real.

The change of regime in Libya and the ongoing grievous conflict in Syria have presented the international community with the awkward dilemma of having to find a fair balance between resolving conflicts peacefully and the rule of law — in short, between peace and justice. It would appear that, in order to attain a peaceful solution to a conflict or to end hostilities, justice must be sacrificed while those who have violated human rights go unpunished; or that, due to inflexible application of international law, conflicts will continue forever. A fair balance must not allow either those who violate human rights to go unpunished, or conflicts to continue endlessly. With regard to Syria, it is time to support open societies and political transitions that can guarantee a framework for democratic development. I wish to praise the commitment of the Secretary-General and Joint Special Representative Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi to finding a solution to the conflict in Syria.

The Secretary-General has said that people want progress and solutions today. They want ideas, leadership and concrete hope for the future. The Secretary-General's words accurately reflect what the world expects from all Member States. We also need to maintain perspective, because if complacency is dangerous, so too are harsh criticism and pessimism. While the working methods of the United Nations system are far from optimal, we should not forget that the reality of today seemed an unattainable dream a century ago. We should move on from talk of dreams to talk of ambition. We should move on from dreaming about change to exerting the ambition to change. We should move on from "I have a dream", as stated by Martin Luther King, Jr., to speaking about the ambition that we all share.

In his statement at the opening of the general debate (see A/67/PV.6), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon rightly mentioned raising our levels of ambition. The step from dream to ambition needs perspective; dreaming requires knowing only how we would like things to be, but having and realizing ambition requires us to know how far we are prepared to go, while bearing very much in mind the path travelled and everything to be experienced along the way.

In that respect the United Nations and its system allow us to face the future with cautious optimism, as the world has been better and more just with the presence

of the United Nations than without it. However, when we look at its evolution, we realize that something is not quite right, as the evolution process has been fraught with limitations, shortcomings and obstacles that the international community must address in its efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully and in accordance with the law. The Secretary-General rightly emphasized his new Education First initiative, which encourages democratic values, human rights and the rule of law. And those values can guarantee equal opportunity and social cohesion.

During its forthcoming presidency of the Council of Europe, Andorra will prioritize education as a tool for encouraging democratic values, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Andorra is particularly sensitive to education, not only in the sphere of international cooperation, but also domestically, as it is aware that its unique, multicultural and multilingual educational approach, featuring three public systems — Andorran, French and Spanish — in a small society with its own identity, has not been a problem, but rather an asset and an essential element of social cohesion.

(*spoke in French*)

We see that commitment to multiculturalism and multilingualism within the francophone community. The commitment to openness and exchange among individuals is good and is far from self-absorption in one's own language or culture. Now is not the time for self-absorption but rather for openness; it is time for ambition and not protectionism. The work of the francophone community is deeply aligned with our values, and we will convene in Africa at the forthcoming Summit of the Francophonie to defend the spirit of openness to democratic values and human rights.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

That commitment to multiculturalism also belies the strong bonds we feel with our Latin American friends. Our involvement within the General Assembly in the preparatory work for the forthcoming Cadiz summit, to be hosted by our dear neighbour Spain, should also be viewed through the prism of openness and the defence of democratic values, human rights and the rule of law.

(*spoke in Catalan*)

The Principality of Andorra today reasserts its commitment to the founding principles of the United Nations: the promotion of peace, liberty, justice, democracy and human rights. Those are not utopian values and principles; quite the contrary, it would be unrealistic and unthinkable to seek to establish stability in the world with any other values. What is important is to come here today to proclaim not that Andorra has one of the oldest and most stable parliaments and political systems on the planet, but that at the end of the thirteenth century its political system was consolidated in a very short period of time and in circumstances that were far from ideal. In a very brief time span, the same system was again able to adapt to modern reality at the end of the twentieth century. In our country, indeed, it was not until 1971 that women were entitled to vote. Yet only 40 years later, in 2011 the people of Andorra elected a Parliament with the second-highest number of female representatives in the world. This is why I spoke earlier of viewing things from a perspective of process and evolution.

History shows us that what appeared utopian not long ago has become reality today. We should not assume that things cannot change and cannot get better. The limits that the United Nations seems to have encountered after almost seven decades of existence will be overcome one day, and today's challenges will be viewed as things of the past. The numerous countries that form the international community have shown how rapidly things can change when there is a will to act. One only has to take a look at the determination with which many of the members of this Assembly have joined forces and coordinated their policies to find solutions to the grave financial and economic crisis that has rocked the world over the last few years.

The need for rapid and profound change has also arrived in Andorra. A year ago, we stated in our speech that our country had one of the most closed economies on the planet and that it posed significant barriers to foreign investment, as foreigners had to meet costly requirements to attain full economic rights. Today, only 12 months later, the Andorran economy is 100 per cent open to foreign capital, and every foreign resident is granted full economic rights from the first day of his or her residency.

The President took the Chair.

Earlier, I referred to openness in a broad sense, but today economic openness should enable us to rediscover the path of inclusive growth that has defined us, albeit now within an open and diversified economy geared to the pursuit of competitiveness, innovation

and general progress. This entire process has been accompanied by an updating of the Andorran model, with an appropriate tax framework and a commitment to transparency towards the international community. The whole process is based on the belief that recovery means not faint-hearted withdrawal, but rather the ambition to open up to the world and a willingness to compete. That conviction is the driving force behind the implementation by the Principality of Andorra of some of the most significant socioeconomic changes in its entire history.

Twenty years ago, the United Nations pioneered the promotion of sustainable development. When the international community met in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, at what was called the Earth Summit, the need to consider sustainable growth became manifest and the subject was tackled from a threefold economic, environmental and social perspective. The conclusions of that Rio Summit, to which scant or no attention has been paid, are today so topical that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio in June, stressed the very same policies. However, although 20 years ago sustainability might have seemed solely an environmental issue, experience has shown us that public finance, economic growth and our model of social protections must also be sustainable. The challenge of sustainability is now, more than ever, shared and interdisciplinary.

Many years ago, the United Nations was created in the belief that maintaining peace and security in the world was unrealistic without advances in human rights, in international law and in democracy. There can be no lasting peace or security without liberty or justice. More recently, we have all learned not only that separating democracy from economic progress makes no sense, but also that it is foolish to believe in unrestrained, unlimited growth at any cost, the consequences of which we are still feeling.

A few days ago, at the reception for the diplomatic corps, our Episcopal Co-Prince, Joan Enric Vives Sicilia, noted the dangerous tendency to prioritize having rather than being. We must learn the lessons of recent years, in which the desire to have everything we wanted too often led us to forget to pursue everything we needed. We must build a more sustainable, more interrelated and more co-responsible world in order to lay the foundations for more secure economic growth. A pledge to progress and prosperity also means support for democracy, for security and for peace.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Earlier today, the Foreign Minister of Chile referred to the address to the Assembly made by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma. Bolivia cannot and will not remain silent about the series of inaccuracies, omissions and falsehoods that were presented to the Assembly as facts.

The Foreign Minister of Chile stated that "Bolivia has no right to claim sovereign access to the sea" and that "Chile has fully met its obligations" under the Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1904 (*A/66/PV.15*). What he failed to say is that in 1879 Chile invaded Bolivian territory, with the help of transnational companies, for the oligarchic purposes of appropriating for itself natural resources belonging to Bolivians. He also omitted to say that the result of that invasion was an unjust and imposed treaty that has not been fully implemented.

It is unjust in that it deprives a country of the exercise of many of its rights and has left a deep wound in the heart of South America in an attempt to acquire rights by the use of force. The Treaty was imposed because it was concluded through the use of force, not with free consent but under threat. The Treaty is unfulfilled because the Republic of Chile has not implemented its provisions. To cite one example, the restrictions on free transit and the nearly decade-long closure on the Chilean side of the Arica-La Paz railway are, among other things, undeniable evidence of Chile's non-observance of the provisions of the Treaty with the State of Bolivia.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia rejects the subjective views put forward by Chile about events in the League of Nations in 1921 and at the forty-second General Assembly of the Organization of American States. Neither that organization nor its Judicial Committee made a negative evaluation of the basis for Bolivia's claim. Bolivia categorically rejects any statement to the effect that the League of Nations or

any other judicial or multilateral organ of that time or of ours has denied the right of Bolivia to free and sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean and its coast.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia rejects the assertion of the Government of the Republic of Chile that the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia adopted in 2009 includes provisions that contravene international law. We maintain that, on the contrary, those provisions are in full conformity with international law, even as we reaffirm our right to a sovereign coastal outlet to the Pacific Ocean, and reassert the commitment of the Bolivian State to the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes set out in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

For decades, Bolivia has sought to resolve the matter through dialogue. However, in 2010 Chile rejected the attempts at reconciliation made in a 13-point agenda, which included useful and feasible proposals to resolve the injustice. Chile has stated that our dispute is a strictly bilateral matter, but we recall that there are 11 resolutions of the Organization of American States in force, among which we highlight resolution 426 of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, of 31 October 1979, a century after the invasion, which states that

> "it is of continuing hemispheric interest that an equitable solution be found whereby Bolivia will obtain appropriate sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean, and (...) resolves to recommend to the states most directly concerned with this problem that they open negotiations for the purpose of providing Bolivia with a free and sovereign territorial connection with the Pacific Ocean. These negotiations shall take into account the rights and interests of the parties involved, and might consider, among other things, the inclusion of a port area for integrated multinational development, as well as the Bolivian proposal that no territorial compensation be included."

We believe that recent statements that use the term "force" are incompatible with the spirit not only of the session of the General Assembly that has begun, whose theme is the "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", but also runs counter to the principles of the Organization. As President Morales Ayma stated in his address to the Assembly, this is no longer the time of intra-regional or foreign colonization.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must respond on behalf of the State of Chile to the assertions made by the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which is seeking once again to distract the attention of the Assembly towards issues that are outside its competence by invoking my country's name.

Chile is a State that respects international law and the sovereign equality of all members of the international community. It actively cooperates with the international human rights system and has demonstrated its support for international peace and security, in particular through its peacekeeping troops.

My Government cannot allow the general debate to be used as a pretext to revisit history and existing treaties and to distort the context of our relationship with Bolivia. We have offered signs of our willingness to engage in broad dialogue. Our physical integration process with Bolivia, in which the free transit regime is unimpeded and duty free, has achieved positive results. We have granted unilateral benefits that serve Bolivia's foreign trade and all of its inhabitants. At the forty-second regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Cochabamba in June, no country indicated that this subject should be addressed within an international organization or on the basis of resolutions that have been superceded by subsequent developments. The organization underscored the bilateral nature of the matter.

President Morales Ayma, in an interview given to *El Mercurio*, published on 23 March 2011, provided an extensive overview of the dialogue process in which he was engaged at the time with the Chilean Government, expressing his satisfaction and confidence that the process would end successfully. For unexplained reasons, on the same day he indicated in an address given in his country, and using offensive and hostile language, that the negotiations were over and that Bolivia would litigate its maritime aspirations. There is a public record of all he said.

Chile once again reaffirms its comprehensive commitment to the rule of international law. Respect for and compliance with international treaties and the peaceful coexistence between States are foundations of our policy. Nothing shall lead my country to stray from that duty, and we hope that Bolivia will also return to the bilateral approach.

Mr. Ri Tong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of

South Korea made a statement touching on the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the so-called human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Concerning those issues, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejects those allegations as provocative and unsubstantiated statements with no grounds and considers them to be misleading with regard to reality and the facts and distorting of the truth. In that regard, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to clarify its position.

First, with regard to the origins of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, the first nuclear weapon was introduced by the largest nuclear-weapon State, the United States. The United States did not hesitate to bring and deploy the first nuclear weapon in South Korea in 1957. In the 1970s, again the United States did not hesitate to increase the number of nuclear weapons to over 1,000.

With regard to the policy or doctrine about how to use nuclear weapons, in the 1950s former President Truman again did not hesitate to give orders to prepare to use the strategic force of nuclear weapons during the time of the Korean War. Again, the Force Commander at the time, General MacArthur, did not hesitate to openly blackmail the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the entire Korean nation by saying that he would spray radioactive nuclear powder. He said that only after 120 years would living things begin to grow again. In 2002, the Bush Administration listed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of the axis of evil, together with Iran and Iraq, and again the Bush Administration did not hesitate to put the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the list for pre-emptive nuclear first strike, together with Iran, Iraq, Syria, China and Russia. In 2010, the current Administration again did not hesitate to clarify its position that the non-nuclear weapon States, with the exception of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, would be given so-called security assurances. That means that the United States will continue to pre-emptively target the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. All those facts very clearly indicate that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been living under the direct threat of nuclear weapons and blackmail.

Secondly, there is the issue of threat. In its statement, South Korea alleged that the nuclear weapons of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are a threat to North-East Asia. That is not at all true. As far as the threat is concerned, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has a different perspective. As soon as they came to power in 2008, the incumbent South Korean authorities totally rejected the Joint Declaration adopted twice at the Inter-Korean summit meetings in 2000 and 2007, driving the situation into its worst state ever in the history of the divided Korean nation. Those two Inter-Korean summit meetings and Declarations were regarded as a reflection of the hope for peace and unification of the entire Korean nation and international community. It was demonstrated by the Assembly's unanimous adoption of a resolution in this very Hall, giving great hope and expectations for the eventual unification of the country and lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and in the region.

Moreover, South Korea did not hesitate to join in hostile activities and military manoeuvres with the United States. Those two countries have not hesitated to engage every year in large-scale joint military exercises. For them, it is everyday business to threaten and challenge the desire of the region and the entire international community for peace, security and détente in the Korean peninsula. Those military exercises are based on the so-called joint operation plans 5029 and 5030; they have various numbers and code names. They presuppose the occupation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, followed by military rule. They have had this war scenario ready for some years now.

A typical example of that was the operation held just last month by South Korea and the United States. It was the largest ever. Over 400,000 troops and different types of sophisticated weapons were involved. All the troops of the various units were involved, heavily trained and fully ready to cross into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at any time once the order was given. That means that the United States and South Korea are fully ready to cross the demarcation line to attack the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is the reality.

Concerning the missile issue, again, South Korea did not hesitate to join in categorizing the satellite launch, which was entirely legitimate under international law, as a ballistic missile launch. Never before in the history of the Security Council has a satellite been accused of being a ballistic missile. The United States is the largest producer of missiles and the largest launcher of satellites, but the Security Council has never taken action on that issue. Only the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea was blamed, and South Korea was hell-bent on joining in against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Thirdly, as far as human rights are concerned, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea totally rejects what they call the resolution on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The most serious violator of human rights in the world is none other than South Korea. The incumbent South Korean authorities are using a dictatorship under what they call the updated national security law. It offers no guarantee whatsoever of political freedom, social freedom or democracy.

In conclusion, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation once again clarifies the position that its possession of a nuclear weapon is due to the blackmailing and hostilities of the United States and South Korea, which threaten the survival and sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is the stark reality in the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Sahraei (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Iranian islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb are an integral and eternal part of Iranian territory. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects any claim to the contrary, including the baseless claim raised in today's meeting. Iran underlines that the measures undertaken on those islands by the Iranian authorities are fully based on the sovereign rights of Iran and the principle of its territorial integrity, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law.

While stressing the importance of the brotherly and good-neighbourly relations that exist between Iran and its neighbouring countries in the Persian Gulf, we continue to believe that constructive negotiations between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the relevant officials of the United Arab Emirates will lead to the further expansion of relations in various fields and help to remove any misunderstanding that may arise with regard to the implementation of the arrangements emanating from the documents exchanged in 1971 on that issue.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to stress that the only historically correct and universally recognized name for the body of water between Iran and the Arabian peninsula, as emphasized by the United Nations itself, is the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, any use of a fabricated name for that body of water, including the fabricated name used in the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, is totally groundless and absolutely unacceptable, and bears no legal or political value.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Plurinational State of Bolivia wishes to exercise its right to reply in order to respond once again to the distortion presented by the delegation of the Republic of Chile.

The Chilean delegation referred to 23 March. That is the date on which the Bolivian people painfully commemorate the loss of our coast as the result of an invasion and the use of force. On that day, we commemorate the death of one of our heroes in defence of Bolivian territory at the bridge of Topáter. On that day, young people, boys and girls, take to the streets in processions in Bolivia, clamouring for the return of our sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

Undeniably, Chile has failed to comply with the provisions of the 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Chile and Bolivia. Not only does the legal free transit regime not exist, but in fact difficulties and obstacles have been raised that have largely voided the Treaty. By way of example, we reiterate the case of the Arica-La Paz railway, in addition to the limitations imposed on the transport of goods and persons to the ports of the Pacific Ocean.

Reference has been made to an attempt to revise history, but what prevails in the scenario is the need to rectify the injustices that have been committed throughout the history of our people and that continue to wreak suffering upon individuals. No military victory, no degree of arrogance grants unlimited rights when they are the result of force, nor should any treaty that is imposed by force or threat be considered immutable over time, especially when it exercises a stranglehold on an entire population. For decades now, Bolivia has underscored the need for dialogue, but to date, after more than 100 years since that invasion, the dialogue has received no tangible response acknowledging that, as stipulated in the resolution of the Organization of American States, there is a need to restore sovereign maritime access to the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Bolivia shall continue to raise the issue in all international forums, to the extent permitted by international law, in order to demand the return of its maritime outlet based on reason, international law and

justice. The Political Constitution of our State referred to by the delegation of Chile states that

> "[t]he effective solution to the maritime dispute through peaceful means and the full exercise of sovereignty over that territory are permanent and inalienable objectives of the Bolivian State".

In recent years, President Morales Ayma has updated the Assembly on the setbacks or progress made in the bilateral process. Unfortunately, the bilateral dialogue was unilaterally called off by Chile. I reiterate that Bolivia naturally reserves the right to apply to all international and jurisdictional forums that permit it to regain its sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Bolivia has a distorted vision not only of history, but also of the facts. The 1904 Treaty was signed 20 years after the ceasefire. I reiterate that it was not Chile that called off the dialogue with Bolivia — quite the contrary. In spite of those circumstances, we have continued to appeal to Bolivia for understanding, as did our Minister for Foreign Affairs today.

The representative of Bolivia suggested that Chile has not complied with the 1904 Treaty. The General Assembly should know that the Arica-La Paz railway to which he referred was practically destroyed after it had been operated by a Bolivian company, which made it necessary not only to rehabilitate the rails themselves but to clean up the contamination that resulted from the transport of minerals. Bolivia knows that Chile has invested tens of millions of dollars in recent years to ensure that the railway shall become operative once again this year.

Similarly, we must underscore that the President of Bolivia, when addressing the General Assembly (see A/67/PV.11), indicated with pride that his country's reserves had risen for the first time $13 billion. We might therefore indicate that, without a doubt, a significant portion of that increase in its reserves is due to Bolivia's foreign trade, which is largely carried out using Chilean ports, precisely on the basis of the 1904 Treaty and on the free transit facilities that Chile provides.

Chile remains prepared to resume dialogue, but without preconditions demanding, without legal foundation, a sovereign maritime access, or that rely on constitutional provisions that run counter to international law, which Chile cannot accept and which are not valid.

Mr. Al-Yafei (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I must exercise my right of reply to the false and illegal claims made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the United Arab Emirates islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. My country, which has never renounced its sovereign, legitimate and historic rights to those three islands, which have been militarily occupied by Iran since 1971, categorically rejects all the erroneous Iranian allegations, which are contrary to all of the historical and legal facts and documents affirming the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over those three islands.

My country categorically rejects, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, all of the illegal measures that Iran has taken with respect to those islands. We therefore appeal anew to the international community to urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to engage in unconditional bilateral negotiations with the United Arab Emirates, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, in order to put a definitive end to the occupation of the three islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates, or alternatively to request arbitration before the International Court of Justice, as a number of countries have done in dealing with similar cases.

We again emphasize that the strengthening of relations of cooperation between the States of the region and Iran, and the promotion of stability and economic prosperity in the Arabian Gulf region require Iran to commit to establishing good-neighbourly relations based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and independence of States, their territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Mr. Sahraei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Based on a vast variety of historical documents, it is perfectly evident that throughout history the three islands in question have been an integral part of Iranian territory. As has been emphasized regularly, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the islands is not negotiable. In that regard, my country stands ready to have bilateral discussions with the relevant officials of the United Arab Emirates in order to remove any concern or any misunderstanding that may arise regarding the implementation of the

agreement concluded between the two countries in 1971 on the issue.

Mr. Al-Yafei (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am taking the floor once again in exercise of my country's right of reply to respond to the claim made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran that his country possesses legal documents regarding its occupation of the three islands of the United Arab Emirates. If that were true, I would ask Iran to table those documents and to bring the matter to the attention of the International Court of Justice, which would then examine Iran's claims and allegations.

I think that it is obvious that despite Iran's claims to have the right to militarily occupy the territory of another State, and given the fact that Iran refuses to enter into direct negotiations on the question of its occupation of the Emirate islands and to submit the question to the International Court of Justice, it obviously cannot offer any legal or historical document to substantiate its allegations. That is well known, and Iran is continuing to exercise a fait accompli policy by maintaining its illegal military occupation of three islands of the United Arab Emirates.

The meeting rose at 8.55 p.m.